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INDIANAPOLIS, SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 12, 1896—TWENTY-FOUR PAGES.

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SOME RARE VOLUMES

HISTORICAL LITERARY TREASURES AT THE STATE LIBRARY.

One Book Published in 1512—Character of the Patrons of the Place.

The State Library of Indiana is little known to the general public, although the collection of books on its shelves presents probably the best opportunity for study of any institution in the State. There is a popular idea that the State Library is a sort of museum, where books are kept simply to preserve them and to be looked at by those who visit the Statehouse while sight-seeing. The patrons of the State Library are not numerous; indeed, they are few as compared with those who make use of the City Library books. The State Library's visitors are loyal ones, however, and they come day after day to accept the excellent opportunities offered there.

The patrons of the State Library are peculiar to the institution, and they form a very interesting part of the library's life. They are a thoughtful people for the most part, who are pursuing some line of study, and they go there that they may gain the desired information and have absolute quiet. The books of reference on the shelves are numerous, being composed of works on history, political economy and all the statistical reports imaginable.

Every once in a while some stranger drops in who announces a desire to study up on some particular topic. Mrs. Emma L. Davidson, the librarian, has been ever ready to accommodate this class of people, and she allows them the freedom of the place. These seekers after information will remain in the library for days, and sometimes weeks, excepting, of course, the time it takes for them to eat and sleep. They will pore over some historical work or some dry report, seemingly delighted with the task and much pleased with what they find. To the average person the sixtieth report from the Department of Agriculture would be heavy and uninteresting reading matter, but to some such literature seems filled with food for study and attention.

But all the books on the shelves of the State library are not statistical in their nature. There are few works of fiction, but many of the standard works are to be found. Works on historical subjects and political economy prevail. An effort has been made to get on the shelves every book of any account written by an Indiana person. The Indiana authors occupy quite a prominent place and fill a large number of the shelves.

OLD NEWSPAPER FILES. The current literature of the day seems to be an attractive feature of the library. On the tables are all the papers published in the State. There are a number of old patrons who remain at the tables most of the day reading these papers, probably because they contain news of the people they have known or remind them of their earlier days before they came "up to the capital." Aside from the county papers, the daily papers of the larger cities are on file, while all of the important papers are found bound for years back. One can find a paper of any particular date on file. It is interesting and instructive to refer to these old papers, many of which were published during the war, and to read of reports of battles as meagerly obtainable at that time. A week or so ago some stranger spent ten days over the files of the Journal published during the war. He did not state his purpose, but it was supposed that he was at work upon some work concerning that period.

The pictures of the Governors of Indiana are always inspected with interest by visitors, for the walls of the library rooms are covered with the portraits of the men who have held the highest office within the gift of the people of the State. The picture of Governor Hovey always causes a remark of some kind, not that it is unusual in style, but that at all times the frame is wreathed with dry moss of some kind with roses strewn through it. Once a year, at the anniversary of Governor Hovey's death, his portrait is decorated afresh and the flowers are allowed to remain around it for the year. Relatives and friends are mindful each anniversary to bring fresh flowers.

About the library are portraits of distinguished citizens, as well as busts of them. There are one or two pieces of statuary which, although not claiming great art, are fully expressive and need no description. There are pictures of different legislatures, while Mrs. Davidson, the librarian, has in her room several old faded pictures of men who appear as if they might have been distinguished, but whom no one can identify. It is the custom at the library to allow no books, papers or property to go from it, but the public is always welcomed to the use of the books, papers and pamphlets.

The library extends from the east to the west side of the Statehouse building. The books have recently been rearranged and assorted, so that now all reports and statistical records are in the west end, while the more readable books are in the east end. There are several thousand books of a statistical nature. They include reports on various subjects from the different States and from the different departments of the national government. There are census reports, weather reports, crop reports, documentary reports and all sorts and kinds of reports. They are never read, but used occasionally by students who seek some particular line of information. Among these books are many which contain valuable records. The material they contain is not as interesting as a few of the more recent books. Here it is that the genealogists gather to look through records and documents from other States, in the hope they may find mention of the family name. The statistical reports from Massachusetts differ from all others, for they are all bound in thick, fat, chubby books, giving the impression that they are suffering with obesity of information.

VALUABLE OLD BOOKS. Mrs. Davidson has in her room a number of old books which a bibliophile or a bibliomaniac would give a great deal to own. A majority of them are the property of the Historical Society. The records of a few have been lost, so it is unknown what history is connected with them. They all bear the impress of old age, and, consequently, are highly prized.

The oldest book in the library is a well preserved compilation of rules on penitence, published at Hall's Cane to England in 1512. The books came into the hands of the library while ex-Mayor Denny was librarian. Francis X. Backmeyer was a frequent visitor of the library at that time, and for the courtesies extended to him he presented the highly prized rules on penitence. The latter is printed in Latin and in large type. In the front of the signature of the bishop of the diocese, but the ink is so faded the name and date cannot be read. Two priests recently came to the library, and they were shown the book. They read the book and laughed, making the comment that there would be few priests nowadays if such rules of penitence were practiced. The book has been the property of the State since 1871.

"The Laws of Arrests" is another very old book, being a treatise for the policeman, if they had any at that time. No mention is made of the observance of the Nicholson law, albeit the book is filled from back to back with valuable information. It was published in 1762, at Edinburgh, and the copy in possession of the library is one of the originals. The book was published at a time when a letter similar to "F" was used for "s," and capitals were sprinkled liberally throughout the text. The author, who signs himself a barrister, has the following to say in his introduction:

"This treatise is designed for the instruction of officers and the information of private persons, whether creditors, debtors, prisoners, &c., in the Law of Arrests, and, altho' the daily experience of some officers makes them tolerably acquainted with their Power & Duty, yet in this Treatise they may find a great Variety of adjudged Cases which may increase their knowledge & thereby show them dangers they are too often liable to."

"The Guardian," published in London in 1758, is another old book. "The Spirit of the Laws," translated from the French and published at Edinburgh in 1768, is carefully kept. There is an old, odd-looking Bible printed in Gaelic and published in 1800, which looks as if it has seen very hard service. The pages are yellow and worn. The covers are of pig skin and dried, twisting the book all out of shape. The history of this old Bible is unknown at the library, although it probably has one which would make an interesting story. The Constitution of the State, drawn up in exquisite style and bearing the signatures of the signers, is another work fully appreciated. There are also books in the collection which, although not old enough to be highly valuable, are so quaint in their style and names and so little known as to make them worth the saving.

A WORTHY ENTERPRISE.

Montefiore Society's Work for the Benefit of the City's Charities.

Prominent among the literary and social organizations of Indianapolis is the Montefiore Society, the active members of which are all Jewish young men. While the organization is distinctly of Jewish origin, its bylaws do not exclude eligible candidates of other nationalities. The Montefiore Society was organized for literary and charitable purposes, and during the three years of its life its efforts have been most commendatory. It was organized in September, 1893, with a charter membership of fourteen. The society may be said to be the outgrowth of the "Youth Social," an organization of Jewish young men which disbanded in 1893.

As set forth in the constitution, the primal object of those who formulated the society was "to bring the Jewish young men of our community closer together in fraternal and friendly relations, inspiring them with common ambitions and aims; to increase the knowledge of its members by a systematic course of work, such as the study and discussion of public questions, current events, matters of religious and historic interest, by the publishing of journals and the like; to do all such personal charitable work as shall be within its power; to amuse, instruct and benefit the public by giving lectures, entertainments and concerts."

The Montefiore Society has a membership of about one hundred, twenty-five of these being active members. Among the passive members are some of the best known business and professional men of this city. Prominent on the passive list are the names of M. Messing, Nathan Morris, Louis Newberger, Henry Rauh, Samuel E. Rauh, Dr. A. E. Sterne, H. Bamberger, C. W. Feibleman and Leon Kahn. The young men who have been the most active in making the society a great success are Sylvan W. Kahn, president; Henry Solomon, vice president; Samuel Strauss, recording secretary; Arthur Leopold, financial secretary; Ralph Bamberger, chairman amusement committee; Isidore Feibleman, chairman lecture committee; Norman Levy, corresponding secretary; Louis Benor, Harry Cohen, A. B. Cohen, Harry Feibleman, Benno Gundinger, Herbert C. Kahn, Edward A. Kahn, A. G. Kaufman, Herbert Kaufman, Benjamin S. Marks, Samuel Messing, Ike Pretzelberg, Jesse F. Solomon, Meyer Eftoymsen, Louis Eftoymsen, Henry Levy, Alfred Jaeger, Julius Kaminsky, Albert Goldstein and Max Rice.

Some of the most pleasing entertainments in the way of lectures ever given in this city have been those of the Montefiore Society. The society made its first public appearance Oct. 23, 1893, at the Jewish Temple, celebrating the anniversary of the birth of its namesake. Its first lecture course included some of the most notable men of the city. Among these were Dr. James Hedley, on "The Sunny Side of Life," and Leland T. C. Powers, "Readings from David Copperfield." An enjoyable concert was given during the first course by the New York Philharmonic Club. The following season the society had Camille Doyle, the noted pianist, and other popular entertainers. The last season's lecture course was not so much of a success financially as it was in literary merit. The season closed Thursday night, with a lecture by Dr. Leon Harrison on "Ethics of Womanhood." The death of Eugene Field and the return of Hall Caine to England had created some changes in the original programme. At the opening of the season the society announced that its receipts from the course above expenses would be turned over to the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society. Each patroness of the kindergarten was given three season tickets to dispose of, and had the ladies been successful in finding purchasers for the tickets, a large sum would have been realized. However, the sale was somewhat of a disappointment to all interested, and at the end of the course the Montefiore Society found itself in a low financial straits. The members are looking forward to a more profitable season next year. It is the intention to distribute the benefits among the different charitable organizations.

How Boys Devour Books. At the City Library, rapidly with which certain boys and girls devour books of a fascinating nature is a wonder. There are boys who come each day for a new book, the indications being that it takes them but one night to read one. The boys fancy the rapid tales of adventure, in which poor boys with widowed mothers surmount countless obstacles, and after a season of adventure come into port with flying colors. There are a hundred of such stories in the library, and the boy who once has his appetite quickened seems to tire slowly of the reading of them. By and by the boy reads all of them, or grows too old for them, and then his visits to the library are missed. The girls are more civilized in their tastes, seeming to desire those books which contain a beautiful story. All these books which circulate among the younger readers are well worn and fingered, while in many striking passages are marked as if the person who did so thought he had discovered a good thing and desired others who followed him to know he. In one of the books for boys the following passage was marked as if very good:

"Ned faced the banker defiantly. His fists were clenched and his eyes shone with a fire of indignation. 'Mr. Baxter,' he vehemently replied, 'I would have you understand, once for all, that I will do nothing which shall dishonor me and bring disgrace to my mother!'"

THE JOURNAL IN 1837

A COPY PRINTED DURING THE SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE.

Some Local People Remembered by Old Residents—A Notable Fight on the Tariff.

A copy of the Journal, printed nearly sixty years ago in this city, has been sent to the editors of the Journal by S. A. Wilson, of Franklin. The paper bears date of Jan. 25, 1837, and in comparison with the Journal of the present day this early number is a very crude affair. It does not term with local news, most of the information in that line being confined to the advertisements, which dwell principally on stock that has strayed away or on the virtues of various nostrums. The copy owned by Mr. Wilson is in good state of preservation as far as the color of paper and ink is concerned, although frequent handling has rent it in many places. It seems in those days the management was as keenly alive as now to present the patrons with a newspaper good in material quality as well as in the intellectual treat. The Legislature was in session at this period, and its proceedings, although tame enough as they now appear, must have furnished an absorbing topic to the people reached by the Journal. One-half of the sheet of four pages is devoted to this branch of the State government.

Few of the local items will recall names now remembered by the people of Indianapolis. One announcement mentions the marriage on Jan. 19, 1837, by Rev. J. C. Smith, of David Macey, of Henry county, and Mary Ann Patterson, of Indianapolis. Mr. Macey afterwards became a prominent citizen of Indianapolis, his death having been recorded a few years ago. Other names mentioned are familiar to those of the older residents, were those of Lockberry and McQuat. The two gentlemen were in business together and took occasion to notify their patrons that they had sold out their establishment. Robert H. Duncan was clerk of Marion county, and his name appears as one of the signers of legal advertisements. Mr. Duncan is well represented by descendants in this city. W. A. Sangster announces that he intends to collect all accounts due him, adding, "You who have tears to shed prepare to shed them now."

HARRISON'S NAME APPEARS. At the head of the editorial column is a name that frequently appeared at the head of the same column of the Journal years afterwards. That name was the magic one of Harrison. It was William Henry Harrison, then heralded as the "people's nomination" for President.

Washington news is considered in a column clipped from the Baltimore Patriot. It is dated Jan. 11, ten days before the issue of the Indianapolis paper, which, considering the mode of travel in those days, was really very fresh news. The tariff then occupied a great deal of the time of Congress. In 1833 Congress had passed a law for the gradual reduction of the tariff, which was then producing more revenue than was needed. The object was to prevent any sudden collapse of the manufacturing interests by an immediate change. The Washington article has this to say in regard to the tariff:

"The tariff! The tariff! This subject occupied the House during the whole day. Mr. Camberling made a long report from the committee on ways and means, accompanied by a bill for the reduction of the revenue to the wants of the government. The reading of these documents occupied nearly two hours. The report is an anti-tariff as possible, and its utter disregard of the great interests of the country and of the compromise act, is entirely unworthy of a statesman, who should always look to the public faith and public welfare. The bill, however, pretends to produce, within eighteen months, such a reduction of the revenue as would, by the law of 1832, be accomplished in 1837. It proposes to take off one-third of the present duties in September next, and one-third in April thereafter, and the remaining third in September, 1838."

A BILL FULL OF MISCHIEF. "It purports to have these for its objects, but the almost universal belief here is that the bill is a humbug, thrown out to conciliate those who are opposed to the tariff and to raise in the South another party adverse to those opponents of the government who have avowed their determination to respect the compromise. Mr. Camberling and his friends know full well they cannot carry such a bill as this, and they only bring it forth as a part of that disgraceful system of government by delusion and excitement which has been attended with so much success heretofore. So convinced were the three staunch Whigs who compose the minority of the committee on ways and means—Messrs. Lawrence, Ingalls and Corwin—that the bill was a mere humbug that, though they had prepared a counter-report, they did not send it in."

"Mr. Lawrence, however, took occasion to speak of the bill in the terms it deserved. He declared it to be pregnant with the greatest mischief to the best interests of the country. He spoke as a practical man acquainted with his subject, and with great impressiveness. He moved the indefinite postponement of the bill. Mr. Corwin, of Ohio, a very able man and a member of the committee, then took the floor, and, on motion, the House adjourned. The debate on this question will be most animated and interesting; but the tariff will not be well settled until the next session."

SHE CLEANS HER MONEY.

A North-Side Woman Who Is Dreadfully Afraid of Microbes.

There is a very fastidious woman on the North Side who refuses to take any money, but silver or nickels in change. She scorns paper, and is perfectly willing to have a heavy pocketbook rather than carry paper money. Whenever she goes anywhere and gets any money, the first thing she does on going home is to tip all the money out of her pocketbook into the wash bowl and give the stuff a good scrubbing with soap and water and a brush. She does not attempt to polish the money, for she did that once, and the next man she offered it to refused to take it because it was "too bright." The money always gets cleaned when it goes to her. Not many weeks ago she wanted to send a dollar by post. She got a bill at the nearest grocery and sent it with a note apologizing for the "dirty piece of money" and "hoped there were no microbes in it." When this woman sees a person hold a nickel or a dime in their mouth on the street, she almost has chills. A dirty piece of money is like a plague to her.

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